



# **NEWS FROM NOAA**

## **NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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### **CORAL REEF ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING DATABASE AVAILABLE ONLINE**

The NOAA Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment will now provide public access to new digital photographs from six years of coral reef field studies. The online Coral Reef Ecosystem Database, developed and managed by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), provides access to images of coral reef species and habitats, which were taken during studies in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Funded by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, the online database facilitates a variety of coral reef research, management and educational opportunities. More than a thousand new digital images were added to the searchable database providing high resolution digital photographs of fish, hard and soft corals, hydroids, sea grass, sponges, and other invertebrates, vertebrates and algae which can be directly downloaded via the Internet.

"These new photographs are an additional component to a larger database providing public access to fish and habitat data for the Caribbean, and are the result of long-term research activities that have been conducted jointly with our federal, territorial and academic partners," said Tom McGrath, database developer for NCCOS's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment. "NOAA is hopeful others in research and reef management, and the public at large will enjoy the benefits of such an expansive visual display of our nation's off-shore habitats."

Coral reefs are some of the most biologically rich and economically valuable ecosystems on Earth. Corals contribute to the food supply, jobs and income, coastal protection and other important services to billions of people worldwide. Yet they are threatened by an increasing array of impacts from overexploitation, pollution, habitat loss, invasive species, diseases, bleaching and global climate change.

Rapid decline and loss of these valuable, ancient, and complex marine ecosystems have significant social, economic, and environmental consequences in the United States and around the world. As a principal steward of the nation's marine resources, NOAA helps coastal communities, managers, scientists and other partners to understand and sustainably manage coral reef ecosystems.

In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment's Coral Reef Ecosystem Database:

[www8.nos.noaa.gov/biogeo\\_public/reef\\_photos.aspx](http://www8.nos.noaa.gov/biogeo_public/reef_photos.aspx)

NOAA Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment: [www.ccma.nos.noaa.gov](http://www.ccma.nos.noaa.gov)

NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science: [www.coastalscience.noaa.gov](http://www.coastalscience.noaa.gov)

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program: [www.coralreef.noaa.gov](http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov)

NOAA National Ocean Service: [www.nos.noaa.gov](http://www.nos.noaa.gov)

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